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SUBJECT: DAS KRAMER'S JULY 20 PARIS QUAD MEETING

Classified By: POL M/C JOSIAH ROSENBLATT FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: DAS Kramer met with his "Quad" (UK, France, Germany) counterparts on July 20 in Paris. (Their last meeting had been in London, April 2007.) Discussions included support for reform in Ukraine and key areas for further policy engagement there. Ukraine, all agreed, was generally moving in a good direction. Kramer outlined a proposed expansion of U.S. sanctions against Belarus to put pressure on the regime to release all political prisoners, but added we did not expect the EU to follow suit due to the political sensitivity of the issue and the recent revocation of GSP. The Germans questioned whether Minsk was prepared to take a step forward at a time when Lukashenko thought he had already made positive steps that deserved to be rewarded. Kramer insisted that the Quad should note that the release of all political prisoners was the line in the sand. All participants agreed on the need for more transparency from Moldova on their Transnistria discussions with Moscow.

12. (C) SUMMARY CONTINUED: France provided a summary of FM Kouchner's recent visit to Belgrade and Pristina. FM Kouchner had asked the parties to engage constructively during upcoming negotiations. France noted that EU discussions on the subject would be difficult, adding that it was a priority to convince the Spanish and the Swedes that a UDI might be necessary in the face of Russia's desire to maintain the status quo. Kramer told the Quad that the U.S. was concerned about possible Russian recognition of Abkhazia's independence. It was important to engage the Russians now with quiet, high-level diplomacy: they had to understand the implications of their actions. A longer discussion on Russia ensued, with Quad participants pessimistic about a change in Russian attitudes over the next two years. EU and U.S. unity, everyone agreed, was vital in dealing with Russia. END SUMMARY

13. (U) Participants:

U.S.  
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DAS David Kramer  
Poloff John Espinoza

UK  
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Anthony Smith  
Nicole Willey

GERMANY  
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Hans-Deiter Lucas  
Christina Beinhoff

FRANCE

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Jacques Faure  
Aurelia Bouchez

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UKRAINE

14. (C) The Quad shared similar views on the current political situation in Ukraine, and underlined seven key areas for continued policy engagement, noting a need to support Ukraine generally while staying out of internal political disagreements. Policy areas included: (1) urging quick formation of a new government; (2) energy security, including reform of the sector; (3) respect for human rights; (4) WTO accession; (5) raising NATO awareness; (6) elevating EU awareness and reform in line with EU standards; and (7) constitutional reform.

15. (C) Overall, the Quad agreed that Ukraine was moving in a positive direction, albeit with fits and starts, and seemed to have (more or less) internal political consensus on the need to move towards the EU. Awareness of EU institutions was lacking in public circles, Faure told the others, blaming a lack of activity by the local EU office. Others agreed but warned that an aggressive campaign could backfire or lead to unrealistic expectations. Expectations of Ukraine's political class about the EU and access to EU markets was finally becoming more realistic. The EU had to be careful with its approach. NATO membership, everyone agreed, was more controversial, therefore more visible. Ukraine was not ready for membership, but the Quad noted that the Alliance should continue engagement.

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16. (C) France's Bouchez expressed concern that Russia may see Western involvement in Ukraine as antagonizing. Issues such as the Black Sea Initiative and NATO membership could put Russia, which always sees itself competing with the West in a zero-sum game, on the offensive. She suggested that the EU in particular should be careful not to get into areas where Russia might put pressure on Ukraine to "choose" between partners. Kramer and Smith both agreed that Russia made everything a zero-sum competition, while insisting that -- on serious issues -- this should only guide strategy, and not decisions.

MOLDOVA

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17. (C) Quad participants all agreed on the need for further transparency on Moldovan discussions with Moscow on Transnistria. Moldovan President Voronin continues to assure Quad countries that no decisions will be made outside of the 5-plus-2 format, but his interest in basing his legacy on solving the Transnistria problem is a concern. Bouchez said that the EU needed to work harder with Moldova on reforms; it was unclear if political will was the impediment, or lack of capacity to absorb concrete reforms. Perhaps EU tools did not fit the Moldovan model. Lucas insisted that the U.S. and EU should continue to deplore a lack of transparency, without being too concerned: Voronin would not take a unilateral step. Kramer surmised that without Russian interest in a solution to the Transnistria issue, any forward movement was unlikely. He was dubious that the 5-plus-2 format would resume any time soon.

BELARUS

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18. (C) Kramer outlined USG intentions to impose additional U.S. sanctions against Belarus, including significantly expanding the visa ban list and likely freezing assets of state-owned companies that we believe are principal funders

of Lukashenko's regime. The goal, Kramer explained, was to increase pressure on Minsk for the release of six remaining political prisoners (three had been released). Kramer added that the U.S. was prepared to withdraw the sanctions proposal, and ease current sanctions, if Minsk responded positively prior to implementation of the additional measures (most likely within the next two months). These latest moves by the U.S. were not irreversible, but we felt forced to take them after telling the Belarussian regime we would do so in April unless they changed their behavior. Change in behavior, Kramer emphasized, was what we sought, and tightening the noose was the best way to try to do that. Kramer made clear, however, that the U.S. understood EU sentiment on the issue, and would not push the EU to adopt similar sanctions in light of the recent decision to revoke GSP. He also stressed the importance of maintaining a firm position unless Lukashenko did the right thing.

¶9. (C) Lucas noted that Belarus had recently demonstrated some positive movement, including an agreement for opening an EU Commissioner's office, allowing the Belarus Helsinki Commission to remain open, and allowing foreign officials more latitude in traveling outside of the capital. While Lucas did not defend Lukashenko, he wondered if the regime would be open to making more concessions at a time when it believed it should be rewarded. Kramer interjected that recently there had been steps in the wrong direction, such as moves against youth activists and others. France's Bouchez noted that the U.S. and EU needed to discuss the transition from isolation to engagement, while recognizing that the process would be in stages. She affirmed Kramer's observation that there was no appetite in the EU for harsher sanctions, and that any such move could damage EU unity. Kramer reassured the others that the U.S. was not looking for regime change but rather regime behavior change.

¶10. (C) The quad agreed that the developing economic situation in Belarus could significantly affect its political future. The economy appeared to be worsening in the face of higher energy prices. Subsidies for military pensioners and students would soon be reduced -- a move that clearly signaled financial trouble for the government. Lucas highlighted Russia's role as the only possible creditor for Belarus, thereby solidifying its position with Lukashenko. He added that as the international community sought change from Minsk, we had to keep the door open to dialogue and avoid driving the regime into the arms of Russia. The Quad endorsed Lucas' comments to keep the door open -- Kramer said it was open, though not much -- but there was also a unanimous view that the fear of Russia's relationship with

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Lukashenko would not affect Western demands for a respect of basic human rights. Kramer added that there still appeared to be friction between Moscow and Minsk, underlining the fact that Moscow's choice for CIS SYG had not been supported by Lukashenko. Our problems with Lukashenko, Kramer noted, were not driven by his relationship with Moscow but by his behavior internally.

¶11. (C) Quad members all insisted that U.S. and EU engagement with mid-level officials would continue, as well as attempts to assist in the development of civil society and political parties (the opposition). The EU plans further discussions on energy with Belarus, but on a technical level. Kramer added that a small Department of Energy team may visit Belarus in August.

KOSOVO  
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¶12. (C) Faure reviewed FM Kouchner's visit to Belgrade and Pristina, noting that the Minister was warmly greeted in both cities. Kouchner's message to both Belgrade and Pristina was that the Ahtisaarhi plan remained a good basis from which to work, and that the additional 4-6 month period for

negotiations was a positive development that Serbia and Kosovo should use constructively. PM Kostunica, as expected, did not welcome anything that hinted at Kosovar independence.

President Tadic and FM Jeremic were less guarded, though not particularly helpful on a positive way forward. Faure also stressed that Kouchner had, for the first time, made a linkage between Kosovo and EU membership -- Serbia could not hope to join the EU as long as Kosovo's status was undecided and ethnic conflict still existed. Pristina insisted that independence was the key issue and not negotiable. KFOR, Faure reported, characterized the situation as calm but perceived impatience. It was currently a mild concern, but they were preparing for any eventual possibility.

¶13. (C) Herve Boisguillaume, the French MFA's Kosovo expert, gave a quick rundown of Quint discussions and noted that the Quint would be announcing its failure to obtain a UNSCR at the UN due to Russian threats of a veto. Quint Balkans directors would be meeting in Vienna on July 25 to discuss modalities of future negotiations. EU discussions would begin on July 23; these would be difficult, Bouchez told us. Convincing the Swedes and the Spanish was the priority. Kramer noted that it would be better to solve the Kosovo issue before a new Russian president was elected; otherwise we risked putting the new President in a very difficult position, and there was no guarantee that dealing with Russia on this issue would get any easier with a new leader.

#### KOSOVO: THE ABKHAZIA LINKAGE

¶14. (C) Kramer emphasized the need to dissuade the Russians from associating the Kosovo case with that of Abkhazia. He proposed that Quad governments make several points to the Russians: (1) the stability and security of the South Caucasus could not be walled off from the North Caucasus, (2) no one had questioned the territorial integrity of Russia in 1994 when Chechnya rebelled, and (3) the success of the Sochi Olympics could be in jeopardy if Russia moved forward with recognition of Abkhazia.

¶15. (C) Bouchez and Lucas expressed concern over the Sochi Olympics proposal, and focused instead on a need to continue with confidence-building measures and obtain a successful renewal of UNOMIG in October. Kramer noted that the Georgians had been restrained in their behavior, and should be given appropriate support. The U.S. was looking for a way to show the Russians that recognition of Abkhazia would be extremely serious. Putting pressure on Russia by discussing the 2014 Olympic games might convey the right message. The U.S., however, remained open to other ideas. Lucas also questioned the utility of a NATO visit to Tbilisi in the current timeframe -- wondering if it would only serve to further irritate Russia.

#### RUSSIA

¶16. (C) During an in-depth discussion of Russia's current motivations and attitudes, all Quad members shared one key assessment: Russia was not likely to change its attitude in the next two years and this was not good. The trends in Russia and with Russian policy were not encouraging, but Quad members agreed this didn't mean they could ignore or simply confront Russia; they needed to engage on key issues as well.

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Lucas underlined the need for patience and further engagement, noting that the EU had to do a better job of agreeing on common language and staking out "redlines." He added that a positive agenda was key in order to show Russia that we recognized where common ground existed. Lucas insisted that Russia was trying to play the role of a great power and it needed to be managed carefully.

¶17. (C) France highlighted the need to avoid both complacency

and open confrontation. Faure mentioned five areas for further EU (and in some cases, U.S.) engagement: (1) early warning system for urgent crises; (2) dialogue on investments; (3) agreement on overflight fees for Siberia; (4) framework for WTO/Russia dialogue; and (5) completion of EU/Russia post-PCA agreement. There was general agreement on these elements. Quad members unanimously emphasized the need for U.S./EU unity on the tougher issues.

¶18. (C) Kramer agreed in general with EU members, and said that we would try to find common ground with Russia on missile defense and other strategic issues (Iran and North Korea), but he also noted the need to push back when appropriate. He stressed the importance of EU-U.S. unity if we wanted to have opportunities to influence Russia. Russia tended to present on many issues a mirror image of the U.S. and the West, a tendency that exacerbated problems. It was important that they understood the need to think through their policies instead of just taking a contrary position, he said.

¶19. (C) Meeting participants all expressed solidarity with the UK on its current diplomatic row with Moscow (Russian refusal to extradite Lugovoi), pointing out that the matter went to the core of our common values.

¶20. (U) This cable has been cleared by DAS Kramer.

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